

Book Reviews

T. Vail Palmer, Jr., *Face to Face: Early Quaker Encounters with the Bible* (Newberg, OR: Barclay Press, 2016), pp. 288. ISBN 9781594980374. Paperback, £16.28.

This book is not aimed primarily at an academic readership, but may be of interest to scholars of Quaker history and theology. It is written in an accessible style that does not assume any significant prior knowledge. Palmer argues that early Friends adopted an ‘empathetic’ approach to reading the Bible which, although it helped shape distinctive aspects of their faith and witness, largely fell out of use after the first generation. To illustrate his proposition, Palmer looks at the ways subsequent generations of Friends used the Bible, focusing on Britain in the late seventeenth century and America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In his introduction, Palmer asserts that George Fox, Edward Burrough and Margaret Fell read the Scriptures in an empathetic way, entering imaginatively into the lives and stories of biblical characters. Rejecting a legalistic approach, they focused instead on an immersion in story, making them pioneers of narrative theology. In Chapter One, Palmer outlines his own theological development and highlights the impact of failed apocalyptic expectations on the development of early Quaker theology. Palmer argues that the Bible can be understood as a narrative that describes the ‘mighty acts of God’ that reveal the divine will and purpose in human history. He proposes that Fox’s encounter with the Westmorland Seekers in 1652 was a ‘mighty act of God’. Chapter Two focuses in more detail on the empathetic hermeneutic of early Friends. Palmer suggests that this approach may have been the product of Quaker marginality within the context of the English Revolution. Chapter Three traces what Palmer sees as the move away from this empathetic reading by second-generation Friends, reflected in the writings of Samuel Fisher, Robert Barclay and William Penn. Palmer asserts that this began a process of change in hermeneutical emphasis from divine revelation to human reason. He argues that this shift sowed the seeds of subsequent conflict and schism within Quaker communities. Chapter Four is the first of two case studies examining the Quaker use of the Bible in specific circumstances. Palmer examines the anti-slavery movement within eighteenth-century American Quakerism. He

finds evidence of a wide range of approaches to Scripture, including rational, legal, empathetic and metaphorical forms of interpretation. He concludes that this diversity did not cause conflict because the community enjoyed unity around a common quietist orientation. In Chapter Five, the second case study focuses on the Hicksite–Orthodox separation that took place in North America during the 1820s. Again, Palmer finds significant diversity of approach to biblical interpretation. However, in this situation, differences of approach were symptomatic of fundamental theological fault lines that generated conflict and ultimately led to schism. The opposing influences of Enlightenment rationalism and Evangelical revivalism within American society pulled the community apart. For Hicksite Friends, Enlightenment rationalism strengthened the emphasis on experience and reason in matters of faith, whereas, for Orthodox/Gurneyite Friends, Protestant Revivalism raised the Bible to a position of absolute authority.

This is, in many ways, an interesting book. Palmer's thesis about the early Quaker approach to the Bible seems plausible and the chapters dealing with Quietist anti-slavers and the Hicksite–Orthodox separation offer useful overviews for those who are unfamiliar with these aspects of Quaker history (even if the historical detail sometimes detracts from the principal focus on how Quakers used the Bible). That said, several of Palmer's positions seem controversial. Firstly, he suggests that an empathetic hermeneutic was the determining factor in the development of the early Quaker vision. He writes, 'I now believe that I have finally found the linchpin of George Fox's understanding of Quakerism; it was his hermeneutical method – his reading of the Bible with empathy, which led to an affective spirituality, grounded in symbolism and metaphor' (pp. 77–78). And further, 'Out of this empathetic reading emerged not only some of their strange behaviours, such as going naked 'as a sign', but also their innovative understanding of the Christian way of life – their anti-war testimony and commitment to social justice ... their insistence on the full equality of women and men in preaching and declaring the Christian message' (p. 235). This appears to contradict a widely held view that it was the direct inward teaching of Christ that constituted the foundational experience of early Friends, even though they continued to affirm the importance of the Bible.¹ There is plenty of evidence in the writings of Fox and early Friends to indicate that they gave priority to the experience of Christ as the living Word over the letter of Scripture. For example, Fox writes, 'The scriptures of truth are the words of God and not the Word, and Christ who was before the scriptures were given forth, by whom the world was made, is the Word of God, who fulfilled the words; the scriptures end in him, who was before they were spoken forth.'²

1 See Macy, Howard R., 'Quakers and Scripture', in Angell, S., and Dandelion, D. (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013, pp. 187–90.

2 Fox, G., *The Works of George Fox*, Philadelphia, PA: New Foundation Fellowship, 1990, Vol. 3, p. 462.

Could it be that it was precisely the direct inward experience of the living Word that inspired Friends to read the Bible empathetically in the first place, and engendered the dynamic interaction between spiritual experience and biblical narrative? Palmer proposes that Fox may not have been consciously aware of his own hermeneutical method and therefore did not notice when Restoration Friends such as Robert Barclay began to adopt a different approach. He assumes that Barclay's proposition that the Holy Spirit is the primary authority and the Bible a secondary authority was a departure from the earlier Quaker position. Could it be, however, that what Barclay described explicitly and systematically was what the first Friends accepted implicitly and experientially? Could it be that Fox was fully conscious of his empathetic approach to the Bible and agreed with Barclay's proposition? Whether intentional or not, this focus on the Bible as the linchpin of early Quakerism leads Palmer to neglect the significance of the Spirit of Christ as inward teacher in the early movement. This is somewhat confusing given that, in his chapter on the Hicksite–Orthodox separation, Palmer demonstrates clear sympathy for the Hicksite position over that of the more 'biblical' Gurneyites. Palmer's work on the empathetic hermeneutic remains of value and might well form the basis of further fruitful scholarship.

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Rachel Adcock, *Baptist Women's Writings in Revolutionary Culture, 1640–1680* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. xiv + 218. ISBN: 9781472457066. Hardback, £62.99.

It is scarcely possible to chart the origins of the Quaker movement without discussing Friends' relationship to Baptists. Rachel Adcock's *Baptist Women's Writings in Revolutionary Culture, 1640–1680* furnishes historians of Quakerism with further evidence about precisely which religio-political points these two movements either agreed or diverged on. Adcock draws out the distinctive features of Baptist theology and church organisation, particularly in relation to matters of gender and the authority of women, so comparisons between how these two sects operated is particularly apt. Baptists acted as the forerunners: attracting large numbers of women to the membership, publishing their works (though in smaller numbers than Quakers) and developing a model of church order that delineated authority through offices and roles (for instance, to women taking up the position of deaconess). Like Quakers, they experienced persecution, yet were able to ride this out. As Baptists are a significant point of reference to Friends, Adcock's work may find a place in Quaker studies. Indeed, one of the women discussed in *Baptist Women's Writings in Revolutionary Culture, 1640–1680*, Anna Trapnel, used her prophecies to dispute Quaker theology (p. 13), while another,

Jane Turner, was briefly drawn to Quakerism (her character and opinions were commented on at the time by the Quaker Edward Burrough, pp. 142–44).

The scope of *Baptist Women's Writings in Revolutionary Culture, 1640–1680* is primarily reflective of Adcock's decision to pinpoint key figures who participated most fully, or most influentially, in print culture. Adcock's study presents these figures' engagement in public forums, disputing and evangelising through print, and so justifies its titular focus on revolutionary culture. This book focuses on the way that images and ideas circulated, which is a way of explicitly paying attention to the effectiveness of these women as writers. Running alongside the analysis of rhetorical techniques deployed by Baptist women is research into how these texts were received by readers, both Baptists and non-Baptists. In the case of baptism, some of Adcock's figures defended paedobaptism, others believers' own decision to be baptised. Adcock extensively discusses the centrality of this doctrinal dispute to Baptist writing (and to the way that the group was perceived by outsiders). Having defined what is controversial, topical or a point of discussion (pp. 19–26; chapter 3, *passim*), Adcock looks to the significance of cleansing and birthing images to find further manifestations of Baptism's significance (pp. 157–61). This is one example of how Adcock's approach to the theological manifests in close observation of the qualities of the writing by her subjects, and the recognition that Baptist women 'appear to have interpreted baptismal waters as both destructive and life-giving, and their experience of both as justification for their prophetic speech' (p. 164). Adcock's focus is particularly keen when discussing women's choice of Biblical role models, such as Deborah (chapter 2; Judges 4), and language slippage is often noted here, where a difference between the Geneva and the King James (authorised version) of the Bible has been observed. Adcock is particularly good at elucidating how compressed images can be unlocked through an understanding of the local or theological circumstance and attentive focus on language usage.

If the book has a weakness, it is organisational. The book defies chronology and case study (which would have been the simplest way to organise this material), and therefore Adcock has to interrupt her narrative frequently with accounts of the local and/or national events impacting on her chosen writer before continuing with her thesis—the underlying principle being (I presume) to show the transference of ideas, which might help explain why early Baptists (such as Sara Jones) brush with later Baptists (such as Anne Wentworth). Had she adopted a chronological approach Adcock could not show how her Baptist writers shared common motifs, or dispute the significance of terminology, but it sometimes makes the narrative less immediately coherent.

Being asked to review this book gave me pause: Rachel and I have been colleagues, and I have seen her work develop over a number of years (I am in the Acknowledgements). I felt able to take on this review in part because it is demonstrable that Adcock's work has gained the approval of other scholars. *Baptist Women's Writings* was nominated for the Richard L. Greaves prize in 2016

(short-listed by the International John Bunyan Society), which is a mark of its quality. This book has a different feel to many about Quakers because it is so focused on writing as the outlet for religious expression, whereas accounts of female Friends are interlaced with stories of their endeavours. Though I would not anticipate Adcock's work finding a place on the bookshelf of many generalist readers, for the specialist this work offers rich evidence and a convincing interpretation of a key period of religious history.

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Stephen R. Berry, *A Path in the Mighty Waters: Shipboard Life & Atlantic Crossings to the New World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. xiv + 320. ISBN 9780300204230. Hardback, £25.

It is seldom that an academic book is innovative and accessible, as well as being meticulously researched, but Stephen R. Berry has marvellously cracked the elusive code with his debut book. Migration studies and particularly transatlantic history is of interest to Quaker scholars; yet the journey itself has been largely ignored by researchers. With *A Path in the Mighty Waters*, Berry has centred on the eighteenth century to fill in the critical geographical gap that lies between Europe and North America.

The central character of this book is rightfully the Atlantic Ocean. The odyssey across the Atlantic stretched out for months and the passengers on board were often subject to transformational experiences, as well as physical, spiritual and emotional struggles and challenges. Berry's research primarily focuses on two merchant ships, the *Simmonds* and the *London Merchant*, bound for what would become Georgia in its founder James Oglethorpe's 1735 expedition. Using numerous journals, diaries, testimonies and travel narratives, as well as logbooks and letters, Berry provides vivid insight into the experiences of those on board. Passengers were exposed to societal nadir from sexual misconduct, foul language, disease and food shortages. In addition to chronicling the lives of the passengers in the cabin and steerage, Berry also addresses the ever-prevalent African slave trade throughout each chapter of the book. Berry reminds us that the American Quaker abolitionist John Woolman wrote that the transatlantic journey was a 'model of how not to live' (p. 156). The transatlantic crossing also created a micro-society of religious diversity that was unlikely ever to take place again in the passenger's life.

The book comprises of eight chapters that are cleverly set out to echo a transatlantic ship's journey: 'Embarkation', 'Sea Legs', 'Shipmates', 'Unbroken Horizons', 'Crossing Lines', 'Tedium', 'Tempests' and 'Land Ho!' The reader is immersed in the transatlantic journey from the start. Berry addresses the difficulties faced by passengers, from delayed departures to the mental preparation required for

the journey, acclimatisation to ship life and social differences that often caused conflict among passengers.

Scholars of eighteenth-century Quakers will be pleased to discover that John Woolman's journal entries are frequently quoted throughout the book and provide a comparative point of view to that of another noteworthy passenger, John Wesley, a founder of Methodism. Fellow Quaker passengers included Rebecca Jones, Elizabeth Ashbridge, Thomas Scattergood, Susanna Morris, William Savery and Ann Moore. Berry reflects on the practice of Quaker women accompanying each other on the transatlantic journey to combat loneliness and to alleviate any potential discomfort stemming from the unseemly occurrences on board (p. 101). However, Quakers were themselves prone to hypocrisy, as Berry also recounts that Philip Georg Friedrich von Reck, one of the German expedition leaders, met a Quaker on board who vocalised his displeasure and harshly judged the actions of the ship's crew, only to use 'filthy and shameful' language himself, and 'was as lascivious a man' as he had ever seen (p. 111).

Berry has noted that Quakers 'created an Atlantic-wide community of faith, which gave them a seemingly constant presence aboard ships' (p. 8). Berry argues that the lack of a centralised liturgy, the emphasis on openness and the ability to create a barrier of silence (if needed) fitted perfectly with shipboard life. Berry asserts that the tedium experienced while on board was combated with religion, which gave 'meaning to the lives of some and offering a form of entertainment for others to pass the time' (p. 173). The arduous journey provided Quakers with an opportunity to reconfirm their religious convictions. Many Quakers found their faith tested on this voyage not only from the salaciousness onboard and the stark economic inequality of the passengers but also from the sway of other charismatic preachers. Berry notes that John Wesley (who was a young Anglican minister at the time) rejoiced after baptising four Quakers while aboard the *Simmonds* (p. 112). Berry summarises the voyage across the Atlantic as offering a visual analogy of human uncertainty that necessitated divine guidance and suggests that the experiences onboard the ship mirrored life—'its inadequacies and dangers, as well as its hopes and aspirations' (p. 253).

Stephen Berry writes not only for academic historians but in a style that has a wide-ranging appeal to non-academics as well. This is a brilliantly researched study that seamlessly weaves a coherent and important story. Berry's research and use of often-overlooked source materials is likely to inspire future studies focusing not only on the Transatlantic World but specifically on Quaker journeys across the Atlantic. *A Path in the Mighty Waters* offers an important contribution to Atlantic history and provides essential reading for those with an interest in transatlantic or migration studies, and is of particular importance to those researching transatlantic Quakerism in the eighteenth century.

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Paul B. Moyer, *The Public Universal Friend: Jemima Wilkinson and Religious Enthusiasm in Revolutionary America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), pp. xii + 264. ISBN 9780801454134. Cloth, \$27.95.

For those interested in sectarianism and schism, Jemima Wilkinson is an intriguing figure and one of a number of schismatics who left the Quaker fold to start their own group between 1750 and 1850. Other examples include the Wardleys, if they were Quaker, who formed the United Society of Believers in Christs' Second Appearing or the Shakers ('Shaking Quakers'), and David Willson and the Children of Peace, with their prized silver band and temple at Sharon, Ontario. Although there have been in-depth studies of both these other groups, Paul Moyer fills a gap in scholarship with this treatment of Jemima Wilkinson and the Society of Universal Friends.

Jemima Wilkinson was raised a Quaker and, while some of her family members had faced disownment, was still in membership when she fell seriously ill in 1776, aged 24. In the midst of this illness she announced that she had died but had been reborn as the 'Public Universal Friend'. So began a ministry that lasted until her second death in 1819 and the start of a sectarian group that continued until 1874. Wilkinson was one of the few women in American history to form a sect and possibly the first postcolonial native-born one to do so (p. 8).

Wilkinson adopted a more masculine appearance after her rebirth and a constant theme in Moyer's account is of how much of the reaction against the Public Universal Friend was rooted in the challenge to gender stereotypes and roles that Wilkinson embodied in her appearance, leadership style and actions. William Savery, who would go on to help Elizabeth Gurney find her way back to the particularities of Quaker spirituality, is quoted as finding the way men deferred so totally to Wilkinson's assumption of power shameful (p. 143). Of course, Savery may have wanted all to be humbled, not just Wilkinson, and led by God rather than human agency, and one drawback of the book is that the reader is frequently given Moyer's analysis without lengthy excerpts of the evidence leading to it. Nevertheless, Moyer is right to highlight the nature and challenge of women's spiritual leadership at this time.

He refers to the Public Universal Friend with a male pronoun, as he claims that this was the usage of his followers. However, virtually all the primary evidence quoted refers to the Friend as 'she', albeit drawn mostly from detractors. I wondered if Moyer might have dwelt on this choice a little more. Even so, he is very clear on the nature and scope of his sources and it seems he has left little evidence unturned. He is also very clear on the limited spiritual message of Wilkinson and how many listeners found it repetitive or lacking in depth. Essentially, Wilkinson claimed humanity was on the brink of the apocalypse, but all could come to God's grace and repent. Like earlier Quakerism, The Society of Universal Friends represented a vanguard movement for God ahead of the day of judgement. Moyer depicts the Public Universal Friend not as Christ come

again but as an emissary, ‘the Comforter’ (John 14:16; 15:26), an embodiment of the Holy Ghost come to warn humankind (p. 23). It was a remarkably successful ministry and for an inner core of women gave them a leadership role they may not have experienced elsewhere. It also, through ambiguous teachings of marriage and celibacy, possibly released many from the constraints of worldly expectation.

From a base in New York, missionary work to the Quaker heartland of Philadelphia was eventually dropped in favour of a retreat from the world to two settlements on the border between Massachusetts and New York. Moyer does a fine job of linking this shift to the life cycle of religious groups as well as to the wider religious history of an area renowned for revival movements. He usefully compares Wilkinson’s convictions to those of her former Quaker allegiance (and much was replicated) and to the New Lights and Shakers, also active in the area. He also contextualises the movement in terms of the shift from ‘subject’ (under colonial rule) to ‘citizen’ (as part of the republic), Wilkinson’s rebirth coinciding with the birth of the new nation and its opportunities and responsibilities—above all its new sense of agency.

This is very thorough book. It has drama in terms of stories of sexual intrigue, attempted murder and legal battles over land, and as much detail on Wilkinson and her ideas as the evidence probably supports. It is a shame that the group did not leave more accounts. However, as a sect it never entered its denominational phase or reflection, or the writing of its own history, and Moyer does a good job of weighing the numerous attacks on Wilkinson against the probabilities of their day-to-day life. I was disappointed to find that my favourite story about Wilkinson was probably a myth. When she was challenged to walk on water it had been said that a plank was placed just below the surface to facilitate the miracle, but also that she asked her followers if they believed she could do it. When they replied in the affirmative, she retired, saying there was thus no need to attempt the challenge.

At the end of the book, then, Wilkinson remains an intriguing character. In the years before her death she lived in a grand house, ate well (and before everyone else) and clearly enjoyed a leadership role, while preaching a universal message. From the point of view of Quaker studies it is interesting to read more about this Quaker schismatic and to see how Quaker-type ideas can be translated into different forms outside of the constraints of the corporate discipline. For anyone interested in Quakerism and revival offshoots or in this period of American religious history, the book is essential.

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Brycchan Carey, *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1657–1761* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. xi + 257. ISBN 978–0–300–18077–0. Hardback, \$40.00.

In *From Peace to Freedom* Brycchan Carey takes his readers on a journey through a subset of the minds of the early modern British Atlantic World. It is a fascinating journey, one that—among other things—traces a thread of the transition from ‘subject’ to ‘citizen’ in the modern world. Carey describes a discourse among people who, without political power, were able not only to effectively shape and influence broad public opinion and public policy but also to significantly advance the progress of the modern notion that ‘commoners’ should have the right to exert influence over public policy.

Making a clear distinction between the ‘events’ that signalled the growth of antislavery rhetoric and mindsets versus the rhetoric that underpinned those events, Carey concentrates on the latter, while of course matching the rhetoric to the ‘events’. In the process, he asserts—correctly—that the seventeenth-century antislavery discourse was a direct, if attenuated, precursor to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which draws an ever-widening community into agreement (albeit tenuous) that human beings have certain ‘inalienable rights’. Carey has undertaken an impressive task in his exploration of the underpinning of early antislavery rhetoric, and he has done so with admirable results.

So what is it that Carey does with the question of rhetoric and antislavery? Part of his meticulous methodology echoes the strategy evident in Pauline Maier’s *Resistance to Revolution*,¹ which traced the network of private conversations by which American private citizens escalated the energy of the 1765 Stamp Act Resistance to culminate in the 1776 ‘Declaration of Independence’. Maier asserted that what moved the American radicals from ‘resistance’ to ‘revolution’ was a years-long series of conversations, carried by a cadre of thinkers, moving from tavern to tavern, permeating and ‘infecting’ the thought of those they encountered, until—seemingly suddenly—unified policy and action resulted.

Scholars have described a similar phenomenon with respect to how Sigmund Freud—who visited the United States only once—subsequently found that, over a multi-year period, his ideas had permeated American psychological theory, because several Americans who heard him speak spread his theories through networked conversations. Carey has read and deeply analysed documents with which Quaker scholars are ‘familiar’ (e.g. George Fox’s 1671 letter to the Governor of Barbados). What Carey has added is the contextualising of documents exchanged and/or archived within and outside of Quakers’ meetings, diaries, personal correspondence and epistles (formal exchanges between distant

1 Maier, P., *Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765–1776*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972.

meetings). Piecing together a tapestry of Quakers' internal conversations and struggles with and about the institution of slavery and about enslaved people, Carey builds his case that the slavery/antislavery discourse among Friends both shaped and was shaped by Friends' goals of unity and community and their shared seeking to define theological boundaries. Building on J. William Frost's careful assemblage of early Quaker documents in which slavery was an oblique discussion, and following the trail of 'family order' also blazed by Frost and others, Carey sets before us a complex collage that is subtly and firmly scholarly, yet fully accessible to a non-scholarly audience.

The meticulousness with which Carey pursues his craft is part and parcel of its persuasiveness. It is almost as if he probed Friends' minutes, correspondence, journals and epistles with a nut-pick, digging out bits of meat and arranging them into a comprehensible pattern that is simultaneously radical and conservative, immediate and long-range.

Carey acknowledges that he is standing on the shoulders of Frost, Drake, Soderlund, Nash, Garry, Dunn and many others. Indeed, he is standing tall on those shoulders, illuminating both the broad horizon of early modern intellectual, political, religious and economic discourse, along with the grains of sand beneath his feet—the faded and blotchy scribbles of ink on yellow and dusty pages. To put it another way, Carey spent years reading centuries of Quaker business-meeting rhetoric, and anyone who has ever waded through *some* of that cloudy rhetoric is forever grateful that someone *else* has squinted through the rest of it.

The project is well constructed. Reminiscent of dissertation style, we readers are given both a preview of the layout of chapters and a fulsome review of the seminal authors and literature upon which Carey builds his thesis. And even as one may nitpick about proofreading errors ('*formally*' on p. 11 should be '*formerly*'), one should applaud Carey's attention to the detail of key terms: his distinctions between such subtle concepts as abolitionist/antislavery; African/black; slave/servant; or abolition/amelioration.

Carey's argument is provocative, eye-opening, persuasive and situated firmly on impeccably detailed research. Nevertheless, there are aspects of his argument that beg for 'more'. For example, he may have overestimated the power and authority of Friends' 'bureaucracy' and 'hierarchy' (pp. 18–19), especially since he (correctly) describes the multi-continental networking that nurtured Quakers' 'culture of debate'. He might have noted that the same transcontinental networking also helped establish Friends' enduring tradition of relocating geographically—and revising theological details—if a particular Quaker 'community' began to feel too constricted. Since, unlike other Protestant traditions, Friends do not bestow theological authority via an official body of universally recognised authorities (i.e. Quakers have no tradition of, or prescribed curriculum or institutions for 'ordaining' ministers), 'hierarchy' and 'authority' were open to interpretation, were often honorific and local in nature, and could be bestowed or removed with relative ease. Two widely known

examples of this are George Keith in the 1690s and Elias Hicks in the nineteenth century, each of whom was elevated—and then demoted from grace—with little ceremony. Even as the far-flung communities professed obeisance to the London Yearly Meeting in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a given Quaker community could go months or years without actual contact with London, just as other British subjects in the New World might live a lifetime without ever encountering a British official. And though Carey mentions the path to the UDHR as part of his introduction, he might have done more to expand his case about the ways that sustained and prolonged public discourse can lead to enduring revolution.

But these are small quibbles. Scholars who encounter *From Peace to Freedom* will be grateful that Brycchan Carey takes us on the serpentine three-century journey that resulted in the profound revolution that wound its way to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We should be pleased that Carey chose to focus on what he calls ‘process’ more than on ‘results and outcomes’ (p. 3).

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Brycchan Carey and Geoffrey Plank (eds), *Quakers & Abolition* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2014), pp. x + 264. ISBN 9870252038266. Hardback, \$45.

Quakers & Abolition is an interdisciplinary collection of 15 essays that re-evaluates some familiar aspects of Quaker antislavery reform and combines these new appraisals with previously untouched categories and topics. The volume, edited by Brycchan Carey and Geoffrey Plank, brings together an international group of scholars and provides fresh directions for examining the sometimes conflicted way Quakers considered slavery, abolition, race and their ambiguities toward moral reform and human equality. These essays cover Quaker antislavery efforts from the late seventeenth century and through the American Civil War. The essays are arranged according to three organising themes, rather than chronology, in a way that brings new themes in Quaker abolitionism into conversation across time.

Part I examines abolitionist tensions within Quakerism. The first essay, Ellen M. Ross’s chapter on Joshua Evans, presents one radical alternative vision for America that combined a reinvention of a dissenting Quaker identity with perfectionist idealism. Evans believed that the kingdom of God could be realised in the individual and then in social structures, which bolstered his view that the Golden Rule could govern racial equality. J. William Frost’s essay shows how Quakers juggled different responses to slavery over time as a result of changing beliefs and practices. Frost argues that factors such as the Inward Light, views on the

authority of the Bible and the anti-war stance, among others, facilitated and then hampered antislavery reforms. The third essay, Thomas D. Hamm's treatment of Hicksite Quaker George F. White, shows how White crafted a poignant attack on antislavery activity among Friends. Hamm argues that White's position derived from his negative assessment of evangelical Christians in the 1820s and 1830s and his corresponding quietism, which held that partnering with non-Friends, for any reason, was dangerous and corrupting. The next essay, from Anna Vaughn Kett, demonstrates how some Quakers, and especially women, of the mid-nineteenth century innovated new methods of antislavery activism, including those Friends who committed themselves to Free-Labor Cotton. However, some antislavery activists broke away from Quakers because of spiritual and political conflicts, as argued in Nancy A. Hewitt's essay on Amy Kirby Post (1802–89). Hewitt argues that Kirby desired a spiritual home that required, not simply allowed, her social justice convictions. The essays in this section reveal the disagreements among Quakers concerning the legitimacy and methods of abolition.

Part II addresses Quakers' divergent views on racial equality. Kristen Block's essay on Quaker views of slaves in Barbados is a cultural, historical and imaginative reconstruction of these relationships. The next chapter, Maurice Jackson's examination of the philosophical influences on Anthony Benezet, describes how Benezet wove a dense tapestry of arguments. Well-read and creative, Benezet combined the rationalism of Scottish moral philosophers with Quaker spiritual concerns of the Light and non-violence to provide a foundation for an emerging network of antislavery writers. Christopher Densmore's essay is a fresh look at the African-Americans who escaped slavery and their interactions with Quakers. Escaped slaves fled to the north and tended to dwell in locations with other African-Americans and, often, Quakers. The interactions between these two communities are not entirely clear, but Densmore shows that African-Americans aided each other in fighting back against slave-catchers, sometimes with Quakers' support. Moreover, Quakers would provide jobs for fugitive slaves, probably practising what Densmore calls a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy in regards to their fugitive status. Andrew Diemer's work on Quakers and African colonisation shows how complicated and paternalistic Quaker antislavery methods sometimes were. His analysis of Quaker Moses Sheppard's activism and correspondence with Samuel McGill, a Liberian emigrant, portrays how some Quakers believed only distance would lead to racial equality. Similarly, James Emmett Ryan's examination of Quaker Charles Pancoast's *Quaker Forty-Niner* examines the views of an everyday Quaker who made no claims to piety or leadership among Friends and, so, illumines the sentiments of Quakers outside of the reform-minded activists. This section demonstrates how conflicted Quakers were on what equality meant, often harbouring less than pure motivations while hoping for abolition.

Part III explores the Quakers' reputation for abolition among non-Quakers. James Walvin's essay argues that the blossoming of British abolitionism was

largely due to its growth as a popular movement. Walvin demonstrates that Thomas Clarkson's data-based accounts of slavery created a language beyond a particularly Quaker spirituality that, in turn, invigorated a new way to assess slavery and arouse sentiments against it. Marie-Jeanne Rossignol's essay on the French J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* contends that the *Letters'* discussion of slavery and Quakers in conjunction provided the French antislavery movement with a pragmatic depiction of how antislavery could be a reality. Focusing directly on Clarkson, the next essay, by Dee E. Andrews and Emma Jones Lapsansky-Werner, argues that Clarkson's relationships with Quakers and his desire to be a successful author tempered his tone and limited the sources he utilised. Gary Nash's essay is a fitting conclusion to this wide-ranging discussion of many overlooked facets of Quakers and abolition. Nash argues that Quakers themselves have been generally overlooked by the public, thanks in part to the Protestant-centric history textbooks used in schools throughout the twentieth century.

As the editors note in the Introduction, this volume illustrates that there are stones yet unturned in the study of Quakers and abolition because many of the Friends most involved with the work deliberately hid themselves from attention and, thus, evade historical records. The essays included in this volume seek to uncover at least some of the motivations, actors and methods still waiting to be explored. These essays will be treasured by scholars of abolition and Quakerism, as well as teachers who wish to provide students with a deeper look into one of the most significant movements in modern history and, especially, the active role of women and persons of African descent in working and exerting agency as actors and leaders in the movement.

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Scott H. Bennett and Charles F. Howlett (eds and Introduction), *Antiwar Dissent and Peace Activism in World War I America. A Documentary Reader* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), pp. xviii + 369. ISBN 9780803240117. Paperback, £25.99.

The centenary of the First World War has offered scholars and nations the opportunity to reflect more fully on the 1914–18 conflict beyond the myth and received wisdom of the past 100 years. Scott H. Bennett and Charles F. Howlett's important and accessible collection of primary sources – including speeches, essays, extracts from diaries and court proceedings, images and lyrics – was published in 2014, at the start of this reflection. In 2017 it is even more timely, not only because it is the centenary year of America joining the conflict between European powers, but also because, amid the current atmosphere in Western

politics, the *Documentary Reader* serves as a reminder that individuals and groups of all kinds can come together to promote social justice in the face of bombast, racism, misogyny, propaganda and violence.

Opening with a 36-page Introduction, and closing with a useful Bibliography, the documents themselves are grouped into ten themed sections, reflecting the various actors of antiwar activism and sentiment: 'Peace Organizations'; 'Socialists, Anarchists, and Wobblies' (the nickname given to members of the international union, Industrial Workers of the World); 'Citizen Peace Agitators'; 'Female Activism and Gendered Peacework'; 'African American and Ethnic American War Dissent'; 'Conscientious Objectors'; 'Repression and Civil Liberties'; 'The Cultural Front and Antiwar Protest'; 'Peace Humanitarianism Abroad'; and 'Aftermath and Legacies'.

For scholars and students whose work is in the field of Quaker studies, the *Documentary Reader* includes material from Friends and Quaker organisations such as, for example, extracts from: a 1917 statement from Friends National Peace Committee (pp. 53–54); the 1918 dismissal of Quaker teacher Mary McDowell for her pacifist principles (pp. 247–53); and the infamous 1919 list of 'Who's Who in Pacifism and Radicalism' (pp. 331–36); which included Quakers and later saw echoes in the McCarthyite 'witch hunts' of the Cold War era. Quaker-related material is, however, particularly rich in Chapter Nine, on international humanitarianism (pp. 297–330). Here the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), the British Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee (FWVRC), and figures working with the bodies feature prominently. The items range from the official working agreement established between the AFSC and FWVRC (drawn from Rufus Jones' 1920 history of the AFSC) to the ephemera, diaries and memoirs of male and female volunteers working in the field. Germantown Friends are particularly well represented, with letters from Katherine W. Elkington and Joseph H. Haines offering insights into medical and agricultural relief and reconstruction efforts in France. Work in Russia and post-war humanitarianism in Germany is also represented. More unusual are the unpublished reflections of Edward C.M. Richards, 'a Quaker CO, [who] performed missionary and relief work in Persia' – though some of his recollections were published in 1923 (p. 312).

As well as these specific items, the *Documentary Reader* also holds material from organisations and meetings with deep links to, or which included members from, the Religious Society of Friends, such as the Women's Peace Party and the 1915 International Congress for Women. However, aside from the Fellowship of Reconciliation (a Christian pacifist organisation), the *Documentary Reader* does not itself discuss deeply (if at all) this involvement of Quakers. It is this that hints at the significant shortcoming of the text: the discussion of the documents is lacking. The Introduction offers a useful, if non-linear, overview of the context in which the documents were produced and every primary source is given a few lines describing who authored them, but each of these is lacking somewhat.

Of course a book should be judged on its own merits, but one cannot help but feel that the *Reader* should have an accompanying volume. Such accomplished authors could provide a thorough yet accessible history of First World War-era pacifism and activism from which readers would be able to flick back and forth between twin volumes to tie together the history with the sources it was drawn from. In this way the complexity and interconnectedness of African-American, Irish, Socialist, women's, pacifist and historic peace churches' activities – though attempted in the *Reader's* short Introduction – could be more fully explored. As it stands, perhaps my reading of the book as a history of working together to seek social justice may not be picked up on by others. Is this important? I leave others to ponder.

That aside, *Antiwar Dissent and Peace Activism in World War I America* is a collection of vibrant and diverse sources and voices. It is an excellent starting point for anyone wishing to know more about the subject, a useful tool for those working in the area, and a key resource for those teaching the history of civil liberties, working for peace and the value of dissent in democratic societies.

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Russell Sandberg (ed.), *Religion and Legal Pluralism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), pp. xvi + 282. ISBN 9781409455844. Hardback, £74.

Russell Sandberg has brought together 15 papers in this most thought-provoking edited collection to further the academic dialogue about religion and legal pluralism. Legal pluralism occurs where more than one legal system operates simultaneously, and may be frequently associated with religious groups who have their own internal system of law, such as Sharia.

Legal pluralism creates difficulties for nation states and the tendency has been to outlaw religious law or make it subordinate to state law. We can think of highly publicised cases in France and Britain about religious dress and symbols, with the state deciding what is legitimate for the devotee to wear or express. Indeed, Irish Quaker Celie Kenny contributes a chapter in *Religion and Legal Pluralism* on the variety of motivations behind veiling and how secular responses are often over-simplified in their understanding. Sandberg himself contributes excellent opening and closing chapters to this volume. In the former he makes a case for the co-existence of alternate legal systems, or what global law and religion scholar Ayelet Shachar has termed 'joint governance'. In this situation, a devotee would bear the rights and responsibilities of more than one jurisdiction. Sandberg devotes some space to how best to describe alternate legal orders, but less on how joint governance or legal pluralism would work in practice. In the case of Quaker

conscientious objection in the First World War, for example, is legal pluralism represented by the exemption to conscription offered Quakers—or is that another ‘gift’ of a ‘right’ from the state to the minority who claim to follow a religious law that contradicts the state imperative?

For readers of this journal, the most pertinent chapter is that by Frank Cranmer on the British Quaker campaign for equal marriage following Yearly Meeting in 2009. It is included in the volume to show that religious legal concerns are not necessarily conservative, but may be ‘ahead’ of state legislation. Cranmer handles the subject well, mining David Blamires’ book *Pushing at the Frontiers of Change* on the 50-year process leading to the 2009 decision to campaign for equal marriage¹ while also providing new material on the subtleties of the legal campaign and its ramifications. This is an important chapter for those studying Quaker process, contemporary Quaker relations with the state and Quaker attitudes to sexuality and marriage. It also shows the internal Quaker ‘legal’ process in operation in its analysis of the way advice was offered to Quaker registering officers. Cramer is particularly astute in dissecting the detail.

Sandberg concludes the book by calling for the conception of different legal systems to be dissolved into a simple binary of legal/illegal. All legal pronouncements then become equal in status. This may advance the scholarship on legal pluralism, but still leaves unanswered the question of authority over competing and conflicting legal discourses. That remains the work of future scholarship. In the meantime, this is a fascinating volume including a significant chapter for those interested in Quaker studies.

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Douglas Gwyn, *The Anti-War* (San Francisco, CA: Inner Light Books, 2016), pp. 199. ISBN 9780997060447. Paperback, \$17.50.

The first thing that will strike readers of Douglas Gwyn’s latest book—at least those who habitually flick through a book on picking it up—is that half of it is printed upside down. The book contains two complementary essays, both dealing with the sources and living tradition of Quaker peace witness, presented as mirror images. One (‘Peace Finds the Purpose of a Peculiar People’) focuses on the Quaker community and its faithful ‘peculiarity’ through a reading of 1 Peter 2:4–17; the other (‘Militant Peacemaking in the Manner of Friends’) focuses

1 Blamires, D., *Pushing at the Frontiers of Change: A memoir of Quaker involvement with homosexuality*, London: Quaker Books, 2012.

on the Quaker challenge to contemporary militarism and imperialism through a reading of the book of Revelation.

In both style and content the essays are vintage Gwyn, displaying the characteristics that have made him such an influential theological voice in contemporary Quakerism. They focus on the apocalyptic and counter-cultural vision of early Quakerism with a particular emphasis here on the idea of 'anti-war'—not merely objecting to war, but inverting the logics, structures and practices of militarism. Their readings of the New Testament treat these texts as the documents of a radical, prophetic, spirit-filled community at odds with the great powers of their time—such as Quakers, in Gwyn's vision, are also called to be. There is abundant criticism of contemporary Quaker cultural accommodation, individualism and loss of shared vision, a story built up largely from anecdote and extensive personal experience.

In line with Gwyn's more recent work, alongside the robust defence of 'peculiarity' and the counter-cultural/apocalyptic vision, there is extended wrestling with the challenges of practical peacemaking in a world of violence—the need Quakers have encountered throughout their history to make compromises, form alliances and preserve imperfect-but-necessary structures. Gwyn (like, no doubt, many of his Quaker readers) wants an account of 'the anti-war' that does not force a choice between engagement with the world and commitment to the peaceable kingdom. What he provides is less a single theory of how this can be done than a sympathetic reading of various more or less successful Quaker experiments—notably, Quaker government in colonial Pennsylvania—in which (as he sees it) consistency of faith and of fundamental orientation, as well as commitment to peaceable living (peace as a way and not a destination) necessitated successive changes in practice.

One of the most fruitful aspects of the book is its extended and perceptive engagement with two biblical texts that are key—and, at least in the case of 1 Peter, under-recognised—for the shape of early Quaker self-understanding. Gwyn's readings are thought-provoking and for the most part persuasive. He does not engage in detail with gender politics and symbolics, even when he reads the sections of Revelation that contrast the 'great Whore' with the woman clothed with the sun; I would argue that here he misses a trick by not taking up the early Quaker theme of women's ministry as a sign of the inbreaking of a new divine order. Attention to gender would add further layers to what is already a rich and complex account both of contemporary 'Babylon'—the military-industrial complex and the late-capitalist culture that sustains it—and of the covenant community that counters it. Throughout the book there are numerous gems of wisdom that have only become more relevant in the light of recent political developments—take, for example, Gwyn's suggestion that the wisdom of God, revealed and discerned through Quaker practices of silent waiting, is 'the anti-intelligence' that 'sees what surveillance cannot detect, what torture cannot extract' (p. 70 of 'Militant Peacemaking').

I am sure that the double-ended book design will (as it were) divide readers; for myself, I found it rather irritating, and not obviously justified. The idea that one could start at either end is rather undermined by the fact that one of the ends has an introduction; and having to turn the book over halfway through—more often, if one wants to read the endnotes or look up a reference—does not add much to one's appreciation of the content. As I discovered writing this review, it also makes it difficult to give page references (there are two pages 70). The lack of any sort of index is even more irritating, particularly in a book that is full of scriptural references and quotations from early Friends. Perhaps the best Quaker response would be to commend Doug Gwyn for being willing to 'live adventurously' even in the matter of book publishing.

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